

DeMesa-Sanchez House
43 St. George Street
St. Augustine
St. Johns County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-135

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

DE MESA-SANCHEZ HOUSE

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Address: 43 St. George Street, St. Augustine, St. Johns
County, Florida

Present Owner: Mrs. Marguerita Phillips, 125 West Penn Street,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Present Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Bath (lease with option to buy)

Present Use: Historical house museum with name "Old Spanish Inn"

Statement of
Significance: The lower masonry sections of the main structure
probably date from the latter part of the first
Spanish period of St. Augustine (mid eighteenth
century), and are therefore of considerable
archaeological interest.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Physical History: The DeMesa-Sanchez House can be identified on both the De la Puente (1764) and De la Rocque (1788) maps of early St. Augustine. On the former it is represented as a small rectangular house with its long side toward the street; this corresponds very well to the vestibule and front rooms of the present structure. On the Rocque Map it has acquired an addition on the east (rear) and a separate structure - probably a kitchen. Additional building in the rear probably incorporating the kitchen into the main body of the house was done c. 1857 when Mary Strycka made it into a rooming house. Juan Sanchez probably added a second floor c. 1791. (Escrituras, 1791 - Dec. 1792)

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1764 Antonio de Mesa
(Juan Elixio de la Puente Map - photostat in
St. Augustine Historical Society library)
- 1771 Joseph Stout by British government grant.
(Escrituras 16, July 1784 - Feb. 1787)
- 1784 Juan Sanchez
(Escrituras 16, July 1784 - Feb. 1787)
- 1788 Juan Sanchez
(Mariano de la Rocque Map, 1788 - photostat in
St. Augustine Historical Society library)

- 1791 Juan Sanchez
(Escrituras, 1791 - Dec. 1792)
- 1800 Juan Sanchez
(Appraisal c. 1803 - copy St. Augustine Historical Society)
- 1808 Marie del Carmen Sanchez (widow of Juan Sanchez)
(Will, Escrituras, Jan. 1807)
- 1832 Lewis G. Milizel and John Milizel
- 1832 James C. Lisk
- 1837- Gifford to Bedell to Hurlbert
1851
- 1851 Mary Allen (wife of Darius Allen)
- 1857 Mary Strycka (known as "St. Johns House")
- 1885 B. F. Oliveros
- 1886 Elizabeth Wallace
- 1887 Susan Meyers
- 1886- Meyers, Sulsner, Grossman and others
1913
- 1913 Margaret Mullaney Butler
- 1949 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Wiles
- 1952 Mrs. Marguerita Phillips

NOTE: All of the above chain of title is based on a report made in 1938 by Mrs. Albert Johnson for the St. Augustine Historical Society. After c. 1840 the records are contained in the St. Johns County Records.

2. Date of erection: Originally before 1764.
3. Architect and builder: Unknown.
4. Original plans: None known, unlikely of recovery.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: There have been a number of additions to the original house of 1764, and some of these are clearly evident in the existing structure and can also be documented with some degree of assurance. The vestibule and two front rooms constituted

the original house, which was probably one story (internal evidence in building, also De la Puente Map). Juan Sanchez probably built a second floor with an outside stairway in the rear (evidence of stair in present structure). Mary Stryscka built further additions when she transformed the building into St. Johns House. The building was restored by G. H. Bath (1959), but the restoration did not destroy any of the additions.

6. Important old views: View of St. George Street (n.d.) showing original balcony (St. Augustine Historical Society collection).

B. Sources of Information:

Juan Elixio de la Puente Map, 1764 (photostat in St. Augustine Historical Society library).

Mariano de la Rocque Map, 1788 (photostat in St. Augustine Historical Society library).

Appraisal c. 1803 (copy in St. Augustine Historical Society).

Report by Mrs. Albert Johnson, 1938 (MS in St. Augustine Historical Society library).

Mrs. Doris Wiles (Secretary, St. Augustine Historical Society), 1961.

Mr. G. H. Bath, 1961.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest and merit: Although the structure has been greatly restored and much extraneous detail has been added, the restoration has, in general, been a sensitive one and the basic eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fabric is largely intact.
2. Condition of fabric: Restored and well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: Two.
2. Number of bays: Five-bay front.
3. Over-all dimensions: 37'-10 1/2" (front) x 92'-3".

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4. Shape: Rectangular with rear ell.
 5. Foundations: Coquina block (except rear addition).
(Note: "Coquina" is local shellstone quarried on nearby Anastasia Island and used for construction in St. Augustine since 1580.)
 6. Wall construction: Coquina masonry (rectangular blocks laid in roughly horizontal courses). Coquina exposed on front (St. George Street); other elevations plastered.
 7. Porches: Restored wooden balcony at second-floor level along St. George Street. (Note: Based on early photograph, but only about half the depth of original due to city ordinance.) Rear: arched loggia with porch above (south elevation).)
 8. Chimneys: Two coquina chimneys (Note: A third brick chimney about midway of ridge seems to have no flue opening below (a result of restoration?).)
 9. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All paneled wooden exterior doors restored replacements.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows mostly have twelve-over-eight-light and six-over-six-light, double-hung wooden sash (some with stained glass) and are all replacements. No exterior shutters.
 10. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof on street front; gable roof on rear ell, whose ridge is perpendicular to that of the front gable. The covering is standing-seam sheet metal.
 - b. Eaves: Exposed projecting rafters; open eaves.
 - c. Dormers: None.
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plan: Modified central-hall plan with rear ell addition.
 2. Stairways: A three-run (two-landing) stairway is of wooden construction. (Note: In upper closet there is evidence of former stair that probably was outside a former rear (east) wall of the house.)

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3. Wall and ceiling finish: Floors generally concrete on lower floor, with some tile; second floor has restored wooden board flooring throughout. Walls are plaster except Room 109 (see HABS drawings), where coquina stone is exposed. Ceilings have exposed beams on first floor, plaster on second (all restored).
4. Doorways and doors: All interior doors have been replaced (based on Spanish, not Colonial, types).
5. Hardware: Much reproduction of Spanish hardware, wrought-iron grilles, etc.; all put in place c. 1959.
6. Trim: All replaced based on Spanish precedent.
7. Lighting: Electric.
8. Heating: Central.

D. Site:

1. Orientation: House faces west, directly on sidewalk line of St. George Street.
2. Enclosures: Patio to south of rear (east) ell; north wall of adjacent building encloses this patio.
3. Landscaping: Patio designed along Spanish lines; brick paved with semitropical planting. Antique Spanish well-head.

Prepared by Henry C. Edwards, Architect
National Park Service
August 1961